

THE INDIANA DEPT. OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS UPDATE



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

January 2011

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Edition 2011-1

IDVA Update Goes Totally Digital

With this issue of the IDVA Update the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs unveils the first edition of its totally digital newsletter.

Due to budget constraints we will no longer be offering hard copy issues of our periodic newsletter. The newsletters will be e-mailed to all County Veterans' Service Officers, veterans' service organizations, legislators and other subscribers.

As an additional service we will have an online version of the newsletter which can be downloaded by visitors to our web site.

One of the benefits of this new digital offering, in addition to the cost-saving feature, is that we will now be able to offer a full color newsletter and, as you can see to the right, we have also added a table of contents for readers' convenience. The three-column format also makes it easier to read as it is more restful to the eye.

All of the links are interactive and will automatically take you to the linked location. **Note:** some of the military links will tell you there is a problem with the web

site's security and require you to click the statement:

"Continue to this website (not recommended.)" but you should have no problem with those web sites.

We hope everyone enjoys this new digital version of the IDVA Update. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. See our mailing and contact information on the last page.



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE STAFF AT IDVA AND SAA!

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2010 Wreaths Across America



Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Superintendent, Alan Burnham, successfully conducted this year's Wreaths Across America Ceremony at Indiana's only State veterans' cemetery.

IDVA was represented by Deputy Director, John Newsom, at the well-attended event which was conducted on Saturday, December 11 at Madison, Indiana.



Indiana Guard Troops Return to Heartland

Story by Staff Sgt. Tommi Meyer, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs

INDIANAPOLIS - Record low temperatures greeted members of Indiana's Regional Corps Training Team - 2 Sunday when the unit landed at the Indianapolis International Airport after a 10-month deployment to Afghanistan and a multi-day trip across the ocean to home.

Finally a quick bus ride brought the 18-member unit to a warm welcome by family and friends.

Commander Col. Ken Ring, Pendleton, Ind., joined his wife, Beth, and two daughters as he recounted his experience of serving with seasoned Soldiers.

"We handpicked the folks that went on this tour; they were all very motivated, very experienced and very dedicated. And of course," he added, "when the families are behind the Soldiers you can do just about anything."

Soldiers with the RCTT-2 were tasked with a wide set of responsibilities in their partnering mission with Afghan national security forces.

"We are a special team designed to work and live with the Afghan security force, primarily the Army," said Ring. "Our job

was to mentor, train and operate with the Afghan forces."

That close relationship was key in the unit's success according to Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Brown, the senior enlisted Soldier with the RCTT-2.

"We are a corps partnering team," said Brown, Indianapolis. "Working with them (Afghans) on how to grow their Army, train it, fight it."

"It takes time and patience," he said.



Indiana Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Brown talks with Indiana's Adjutant General Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, and his wife, Rowana, at the Regional Corps Training Team - 2's welcome home celebration in Indianapolis, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010. Brown, Indianapolis, was the team's senior enlisted Soldier during a 10-month deployment to Afghanistan. Indiana National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Tommi Meyer

According to two engineering soldiers in the unit, that patience and training helped the team accomplish the mission.

"It was rewarding to finally see them get it; to have a project go from concept through design and the construction process; to have an idea when we got there and when we leave it's actually a building and an Afghan capability," said Maj. John Pitt, Valparaiso, Ind., engineer officer speaking about the Afghan non-

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Whitley County Veterans' Service Office now has a landmark home in the community

By Jennifer Zartman Romano

Whitley County veterans can feel proud in knowing a landmark location has been designated for their use.



(Talk of the Town photos copyright Jennifer Zartman Romano) Above, the landmark turret on the Van Buren side of the Whitley County Government Center is now the home of the Whitley County Veterans Service Office.

Recently, the Whitley County Commissioners, led by president Mike Schrader, designated the turret office on the second floor of the Whitley County Government Center Building for the Whitley County Veterans Service Office after learning that a larger, more accessible site was needed for a growing population of veterans.

The new location is spacious, beautiful and, best of all, according to Veterans Service Officer Pastor Gene Rohrer, it is handicap accessible.

Often, accessibility is key. Rohrer meets with as many as

eight veterans each week to help them enroll in the services of the VA Hospital, apply for compensation for their service-related disabilities and occasionally apply for pensions.

"It's a continual process," he said of the work he does with veterans.

For several years, Rohrer had been welcoming the county's veterans to an office on the second floor of his home near Tri Lakes. Unfortunately, the setup wasn't ideal as many of the veterans Rohrer works with are disabled. Rohrer also said he's seeing more and more veterans all the time, so a central, accessible location is what's best for veterans.

He said he occasionally made house calls to veteran's homes or set up meetings at the Whitley County Council on Aging's The Woodlands Senior Center. But, this wasn't ideal. The veterans of Whitley County needed and well-deserved a home.

"It keeps increasing," Rohrer said of the numbers of veterans he now sees in his office overlooking downtown Columbia City. "I'm seeing more Vietnam era veterans now than anything, but we're starting to see veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan too." Rohrer said he continues to work with World War II and Korean War veterans as well.

"Everybody thinks it's great," Rohrer said of veterans' comments on the new office. "They feel like they're entitled to this."



Veterans Service Officer Gene Rohrer, and the county's veterans, are proud of the new space designated for their use.

The new office, located at 220 West Van Buren, Suite 201, features a desk for office volunteer Terry Almon as well as a large table for Rohrer to conduct meetings with veterans.

"This really wasn't necessary when we had one or two people a week, but it sure is nice now," Rohrer said.



Veterans Service Office volunteer Terry Almon assists Rohrer in aiding the county's veterans and linking them with services they need.

To schedule an appointment with the Whitley County Veterans Service Office, call 248-3189 or (260) 341-9470. You can also send an email to whitleyvso@kcaccess.com

From the Whitley County "Talk of the Town", Whitley County's Online News Source, November 11, 2010

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Positions Open at St. Vincent Health

St. Vincent Health is one of the largest employers in the state of Indiana with more than 13,000 associates, meaning whatever your specialization and whatever your professional goals the sky is the limit.

St. Vincent Health has been serving the health care needs of Indiana residents for more than 126 years. Our health ministry consists of 20 facilities, with a direct presence in 46 Indiana counties. The system is comprised of one quaternary facility, three tertiary hospitals, six critical access hospitals, six specialty hospitals, several joint venture partners and clinical affiliates.

A philosophy of strong partnerships with businesses, communities, physicians, associates and others is regarded by St. Vincent Health as essential to improving the health status of Hoosiers.

As advocates for a healthier society, we have developed strong partnerships with communities and individuals who share compatible values. We believe that health care should be kept local, which is why we have extended our reach beyond urban areas such as Indianapolis, Kokomo, and An-

derson, and into rural communities where health services are often scarce.

Please visit our web site to search and apply for opportunities of interest at www.stvincent.org/jobs. St. Vincent Health is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

VA Launching New Personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbook

WASHINGTON (Nov. 18, 2010) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is piloting new, personalized Veterans Health Benefits Handbooks. The handbooks are tailored to provide enrolled Veterans with the most relevant health benefits information based on their own specific eligibility. In essence, each handbook will be written for the individual Veteran.

"These handbooks will give Veterans everything they need to know and leave out everything that doesn't apply to them," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Our Veterans will now have a comprehensive, easy to understand roadmap to the medical benefits they earned with their service."

In addition to highlighting each Veteran's specific health benefits, the handbook also provides

contact information for the Veteran's preferred local facility, ways to schedule personal appointments, guidelines for communicating treatment needs and an explanation of the Veteran's responsibilities, such as copayments when applicable.

"Enhancing access isn't just about expanding the kinds of services VA provides. It also includes making sure we do everything we can to ensure Veterans have a clear understanding of the benefits available to them so they can make full use of the services they have earned," Shinseki said.

The new handbooks will initially be available only to certain Veterans in Cleveland and Washington, D.C., areas. Following the pilot phase, full implementation is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2011 for across the county.

For additional information, go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility or call VA's toll-free number at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).



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Be Aware of Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) It's NOT the VA

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans.

This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way. See: <http://www.facebook.com/1/e7d9fyoi4bcwPpqRoW2mFEouow>; www.vaservices.org/us/index.html

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services.

In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel

(022G2)

Forwarded by Kevin Secor, VSO
Liaison, Office of the Secretary
of the Department of Veterans
Affairs.

American Legion Veterans Service Office is Relocating

The American Legion Service Office made this announcement in the latest Service and Legislative Update dated 11-30-10: Since the dates mentioned have passed, I've modified it somewhat.

For the past several months, VA has been remodeling all its Indianapolis offices at the 575 North Pennsylvania Street Minton-Capehart Federal Building.

The second stage of VAs major remodeling effort includes moving the service organizations to the core of the building for approximately 8 months while remodeling the outer office areas. Our move was scheduled to take place the week of December 13, 2010.

Our ability to accept phone calls or schedule interviews during that week [was] unlikely. If you call[ed] our office between December 13 and December 17 and were unsuccessful, we apologize. Please try again.

Disability Evaluation Streamlined

A pilot program that eases medical separation and speeds benefit payments for servicemembers too wounded, sick or injured to stay in the military will expand to all military medical sites across the services by October 2011. The new program brings together VA and military medical separation processes while servicemembers are still on active duty.

Under the new system, wounded, ill or injured servicemembers receive medical evaluations by VA-certified doctors using VA guidelines, while DoD officials use these exams to determine if a servicemember is able to continue in uniform. For servicemembers, the process is faster -- with only one set of examinations to complete. The pilot program has been operating in 27 sites.

From Military.com - 11/30/2010

While we are in the temporary office space, our mailing address will remain the same:

The American Legion Veterans
Service Office
575 North Pennsylvania St, Rm 325
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1519



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State Veterans' Benefits from other states

Most states offer their own veterans benefits. These benefits may include educational grants and scholarships, special exemptions or discounts on fees and taxes, home loans, veteran's homes, free hunting and fishing privileges, and more.

Each state manages its own benefit programs and County Veterans' Service Officers frequently get questions from local veterans about the benefits offered by other states.

Military.com offers a quick link to the veterans' benefits in other states. Go to:

<http://www.military.com/benefits/veteran-benefits/state-veterans-benefits-directory>

VA Testing Quicker Access to Medical Records

WASHINGTON (Nov. 29, 2010) - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working to significantly reduce the average time needed to obtain health-care records from private physicians with the help of a private contractor and the Internet to speed claims decisions.

"Innovations that will speed, simplify or improve our services to Veterans are receiving rigorous tests at VA," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We are committed to harnessing the best technology and the brightest minds in the government and private sector to ensure Veterans receive the benefits they have earned."

One innovation is using a private contractor to assist VA in collecting health-care records. When private medical records support a Veteran's application for benefits, a contractor will quickly retrieve the records from the health-care provider, scan them into a digital format and send the material to VA through a secure transmission.

This pilot project hopes to validate initial estimates that a specialized contract can yield records required to process Veterans' disability compensation claims in seven to 10 days instead of VA's average 40 days. In addition, the additional contract frees VA staff to focus on core duties to process claims more quickly.

Exploring economical contract support for time savings is one of more than three dozen initiatives supporting VA's claims transformation plan, which aims to ensure that by 2015, Veterans' claims are decided within 125 days.

VA officials emphasize that in all cases Veterans must sign documents approving the release

of their medical records to the department from private health-care providers.

The test is expected to involve about 60,000 records requests among regional benefits offices in Phoenix; New York City; St. Louis; Portland, Ore.; Chicago; Anchorage, Alaska; Indianapolis, and Jackson, Miss. At the conclusion of the test, VA officials will decide whether to cancel, modify or expand any changes in procedures nationwide.

American Legion Joins Fight Over Medals Law

The Associated Press

Posted : Wednesday Dec 15, 2010 11:24:29 EST

DENVER — The American Legion has joined federal prosecutors in arguing that a federal court in Denver should uphold a law making it illegal to lie about being a military hero.

The veterans group filed a friend-of-the-court brief this week with the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Prosecutors are asking the appeals court to overturn a lower court ruling that the Stolen Valor Act violates free speech.

The law makes it a crime punishable by up to a year in jail to falsely claim to have received a medal from the U.S. military.

A federal appeals court in California has also ruled the law is unconstitutional. Prosecutors there have asked the court to reconsider.

Neither the Colorado nor California appeals court has said when it might rule.

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New Location for the Indianapolis Vet Center

The Indianapolis Vet Center has moved. The new address and phone number is: 8330 Naab Road, Suite 103, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268; phone, 317-988-1660, Fax, 317-988-1617. Their normal working hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In an effort to better serve veterans and family members, upon request, Vet Centers will provide services after normal work hours and/or on weekends. All military veterans are eligible to receive services, treatment and care at Vet Centers.

The Indianapolis Vet Center is staffed with 80% veterans, including women veterans on most teams, and treats over 4,000 veterans annually. The Vet Center provides free services that are private and confidential. They provide individual, group, and family therapy, as well as assistance with bereavement, claims, readjustment/ PTSD assessments, and employment services.

They also provide sensitive and specialized therapy for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors. It is believed that 8-20% of female veterans have experienced MST and that many service members are discharged without awareness of eligibility for treat-

ment at VA Medical Centers or Vet Centers. The Vet Center has a therapist who is specially trained to assess and provide therapy for MST.

More information about Vet Centers or the location of a Vet Center can be obtained by calling 317-988-1600. For more information about MST, contact Laura Malone at 317-988-3469.

*From the American Legion
Service and Legislative Update,
11-30-10*

Applegate Addresses 3rd Medical Recruiting Battalion



IDVA Director, Tom Applegate, was privileged to address the recruiters and their spouses of the 3rd Medical Recruiting Battalion (Spartan Strong!) on Saturday, November 6th at the Hilton Downtown, Indianapolis. Topic? State veterans' benefits, of course.

Shown below, receiving a plaque naming him an honorary Spartan is Applegate with LTC Ronald Walker (left) and CSM Donald Thelen.



The State Student Assistance Com- mission of Indiana (SSACI) offers other grants and scholarships

The Remission of Fees program for the children of disabled veterans and for recipients of the Purple Heart medal are not the only state-funded programs for helping students with their college aspirations.

The State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana offers many other educational incentives for college-bound students. Parents and students who call County Veterans' Service Officers and who don't initially appear to be eligible for the veteran-related educational benefits should be referred to the SSACI site. The student just might be eligible for one or more of the other offered grants or scholarships.

Go to:

<http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2359.htm>

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Free Retreat for Female Veterans and Service Members

**February 10 through
February 13, 2011
Oceanside, California**

During this four-day retreat we will focus on healing, connecting, & finding our strengths.

- Connect with other women veterans by sharing stories, experiences, and community
- Learn stress management techniques
- Exercise your creative side
- Enjoy a beautiful setting

Who is eligible? All women who have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since September 11th, 2001 - without regard for race, religion, politics or sexual preference.

What does the retreat cost? Lodging and meals for the entire weekend is FREE. We strive to make our retreats as free as possible, but can no longer provide transportation for our participants. Upon acceptance, you are responsible for your own transportation. We offer a travel stipend on a per mile basis, up to \$150.

Preference is given to those applicants within 300 miles of the retreat site in Oceanside,

CA.

Want to apply?

<http://www.cominghomeproject.net/node/7399>

Everyone is welcome as they are and all are treated with respect. There is no particular political or religious belief or affiliation that is represented or required. The intention of the Coming Home Project is to serve our military and contribute to their well-being and healing.



From the Coming Home Project web site at:

http://www.cominghomeproject.net/event/retreat_female_veterans_and_service_members

House Postpones Debate On "Women Veterans Bill Of Rights."

[CQ](#) (11/30, Symes) reports, "House leaders postponed a debate scheduled for Monday on a measure that would require Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to display a so-called

'Women Veterans Bill of Rights' amid...concerns over abortion and the addition of language on injured and amputee veterans."

The legislation, HR 5953, "would direct the secretary of Veterans Affairs...to ensure" that the list of rights include the "right to request and get treatment by clinicians with specific training and experience in women's health issues.' ...Opponents have warned that by identifying such rights, the bill could establish a legal basis for mandating abortion coverage and require the VA to hire abortion providers."

Hoosier Women Veterans' Conference

The Hoosier Women Veterans' Conference which was originally scheduled for September of last year (2010) will be rescheduled for the Spring of 2011.

We anticipate a date in either April or May and will be coordinating with AMVETS Post 99, the same site as the canceled conference.

We truly regretted the decision to cancel the conference but because of a staff shortage at ID-VA we had no other choice. The Spring conference should be one of the best we've ever put together, so we encourage those who regularly participate to do so again this year and encourage their veteran friends to also attend.

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State Approving Agency (SAA) News



Many people are still unaware of what the State Approving Agency (SAA) is and what our responsibilities include. We decided to revisit this subject and shed additional light on what many refer to us as being the face of the GI Bill & Post 9/11 Education Benefits. Each state has a State Approving Agency which approves VA Educational Benefits (GI Bill) so that Veterans and other eligible persons may use their entitled educational benefits. An eligible member cannot receive their benefits unless the SAA has approved those programs. We are primarily responsible to review, evaluate, approve and oversee schools and training facilities to ensure quality programs of education and training under state and federal criteria.

The State Approving Agency approves educational programs under contract for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The types of approved training establishments include the following:

- Universities and Colleges
- Vocational Schools
- Business Schools
- Professional Schools
- Vocational Flight Schools
- High Schools
- Apprenticeships
- On-the-Job Training Programs

- Licensing and Certification Tests

The following is a list of entitlement programs for which the Indiana State Approving Agency has approval and supervisory responsibilities:

- Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30)
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 32)
- Post 9/11 GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 33)
- Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35)
- Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606)
- Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1607)

Indiana has over 370 educational institutions, as well as 407 apprenticeships and on-the-job training sites approved to offer educational programming and training to Indiana active duty service personnel, guard, reservists, veterans and eligible dependents.

What happens if an eligible member encounters an institution or training program they desire to participate in that has not yet been approved by our agency? Simply call one of our program directors and we will make an initial assessment. We can be found at <http://www.in.gov/dva/2331.htm> or call 1-800-400-4520. Our needs are few; a point of contact and general description

of program to include length and end goal.

To learn how the GI Bill & Post 9/11 Education Benefits can pay for On-The-Job Training, Apprenticeships, Flight Schools, Licensure & Testing, & both College and Non-College Degree Programs contact the Indiana State Approving Agency or see the Federal VA web site at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>.

Improvements To New GI Bill Could Mean End Of Old One

The current issue of the Army Times (12/6/2010, Maze,) reports, "The price of improving" the one-year-old Post-9/11 GI Bill "may be the death of the 24-year-old Montgomery GI Bill.

The tradeoff is part of a package of changes to the new GI Bill program that advocates are trying to ensure does not increase the government's overall costs."

The Times says that while most veterans "wouldn't miss the Montgomery GI Bill and its flat-rate monthly benefit because they can get more money under" the Post-9/11 GI Bill, "some students are better off...under the old program, such as those attending schools in low-cost areas where tuition is discounted or free for

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[Guard Returns \(cont. from Page 2\)](#)

commissioned officer academy built during the deployment.

According to Pitt and Sgt. 1st Class Kirk Brownson, there were challenges to the process, but the specialized training they received at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center and Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana helped with communication and relational challenges.

"Being partnered at the corps level the best training we received was key leader engagement training," said Pitt of the specialized training the unit requested. "We took Dari (language) courses, negotiation courses and key leader courses."

"By the end of the tour I was starting to realize that the best way to do things was to just plant seeds ... then leave. I would come back, and it would be implemented," said Brownson, Valparaiso, Ind. "It's very much a pride thing and wanting it to be their idea."

This helped when trying to encourage the Afghan forces to work toward a more successful model according to Pitt.

"American NCO's are professional enough to get the job done. Afghan NCO's aren't there yet, but we are helping them get there," said Pitt.

According to the commander, it all comes back to people.

"We just had a really good group," said Ring. "Both this side

(home) of the war and the other side."

Brown, who shares six children, their spouses, and eight grandchildren with wife, Cheryl, echoes the commander's sentiment on strong bonds at home and what it takes to make any Soldier a success.

"The Soldier is a family unit; one piece just goes forward into the war.

"We," he said motioning to his wife, "are one Soldier, right here."



Indiana Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Ian Smith, Columbus, Ind., a member of Regional Corps Training Team - 2, receives a hug from his daughter, Katie, during the unit's welcome home celebration in Indianapolis, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010. Smith and the rest of the team returned from a 10-month deployment to Afghanistan. Indiana National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Tommi Meyer

Federal Government Holds Forum on Homeless Veterans

Goal of Eliminating Homelessness among Veterans

WASHINGTON - More than 400 participants from across the

country are expected to take part in a two-day national forum on ending homelessness among Veterans by strengthening preventative measures and collaboration among government and private-sector organizations.

"For twenty years, we have provided a wide array of services to homeless Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Today, we are intervening earlier in the problems that can lead to homelessness, such as mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment and financial problems."

The forum, held Dec. 7-8 in Arlington, Va., will include health care providers, outreach coordinators, homeless specialists and service providers from various federal agencies, plus representatives from the private sector and Veterans service organizations.

Participants will work together in planning how to increase access to stable and affordable housing; expand economic security; improve health care; and change the nation's system for dealing with homelessness.

VA and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, working in partnership with other federal agencies, are steadily decreasing homelessness among Veterans. Last year, the Department spent nearly

\$535 million on homeless programs, not counting health care associated with homelessness.

"With our partners at the Department of Labor and the Depart-

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ment of Housing and Urban Development, we have marshaled considerable expertise and resources to help our Veterans leave the road to homelessness," Shinseki added.

Among many programs, VA has also created a national hotline for homeless Veterans - 1-877-424-3838 -which is staffed around the clock, seven days a week. Responders can help callers find food, shelter, clothing and other assistance for homeless Veterans.

Change of Address for Application Submission to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) and the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB)

The Army Review Boards Agency (ARBA) office at St. Louis has been closed in conjunction with Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Applications to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR), DD Form 149; and the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB), DD Form 293, must now be mailed to:

**1901 South Bell Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4508**

The current editions of these applications also provide this mailing address. The current applications can be printed from the ARBA website

<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil>

The forms are in a fillable format so that applicants can word process on the forms and print them.

The ARBA website also provides an online process for application to the ABCMR and the ADRB that can be used instead of completing and mailing the hard copy applications. We encourage use of the online application process. Veterans Service Officers may do the computer work for applicants but for all applications, the applicant or legal representative must sign the application.

When mailing a hard copy application or the signature page for the online application, applicants should provide copies of all records and documents they have in their possession related to their application.

It should not be assumed that all the documents they wish the Board to consider are in their military record.

You and the veterans you serve will find the ARBA website very useful.

It provides the information, forms, online application, application guides, answers to common questions, and links to many other helpful sites. If you have ques-

tions, you may contact us through the ARBA website "Contact Us" link at the bottom of the website home page.

Thank you for all you do for Veterans, Soldiers, and their families.

Adair Petty
Operations Officer
Army Review Boards Agency
<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil>

Cold War Certificates Are Still Available

In accordance with section 1084 of the Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act, the Secretary of Defense approved awarding Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States anytime during the Cold War era, which is defined as Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991.

This is the only official site on which to request Cold War Recognition Certificates. This site is operated by the United States Army, the executive agency for the Cold War Recognition Program. Cold War Recognition Certificates are available to qualified individuals at no cost. Any other site offering these certificates or replicas for sale or purchase are not official

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sites and are not approved or endorsed by the US Army.

Due to the remarkable success of this program, turn-around time for mailing certificates will be a **minimum of 2 months**. The CWRS Operations Team is working as fast as possible to clear the backlog. Please do not request feedback prior to 2 months from the request date. Thank you for your patience and interest in the Cold War Recognition program.

All members of the armed forces and federal government civilian personnel who faithfully served the United States during the Cold War era, Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991. Individuals requesting a certificate will certify that their character of service was honorable. [Acceptable supporting document](#) for proof of service is any official government or military document with recipient's name, Social Security Number or Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, and date of service.

- [Apply for the Certificate](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Preview Certificate](#)

Phone Line: (703) 325-5864

Fax: 1-800-723-9262

Email the CWRS Team at:
cwrs1@conus.army.mil

Address:

• U.S. Army Human Resources Command
Cold War Recognition Office
Bldg II Attn: AHRC-CWRS-RM21
1600 Spearhead Division Avenue
Fort Knox, KY 40122

IDVA Annual Report

It's been a busy year for the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs and the State Approving Agency (SAA).

Starting with the SAA, Director, Ron Rousch has submitted a bid to host the National SAA Association Conference in 2013. In addition, Indianapolis will also be the site for the National Training Institute Conference this year (2011).

Ron and his crew of Program Directors has put the State of Indiana on the national SAA map in a big way and we are very proud of the fine work they've done. While we don't yet have the figures for 2010, in 2009 our SAA was instrumental in bringing in over \$56 million dollars in educational benefits to eligible veterans, their spouses and dependents in the form of G.I. Bill benefits.

On the IDVA side, CVSOs continued to assist Hoosier veterans with their claims. Due in part to their efforts, veterans brought over \$718 millions dollars in compensation and pension benefits into the Indiana economy.

The federal VA invested over \$6 million in new construction in the state, and the VA medical system spent over \$788 million dollars for medical care for almost 117,000 veteran patients. That means that over one fifth of Indiana's 500,806 veterans are enrolled in the VA health care system.

Perhaps best of all, Indiana's percentage of veterans who are receiving VA compensation or pension rose to over 12%, achieving a goal set by the Administration in 2005.

We have a long way to go, but we've also come a long way. Although we have always had a certain amount of complaints in our office, we consistently hear from veterans who tell us that Indiana has the best package of benefits for veterans, spouses and dependents. Following is a list of the applications for state veterans' benefits we processed in 2010.

Remission of Fees.....	4,279
Tax Deductions.....	4,457
Disabled Hoosier Plates.....	878
Purple Heart Plates.....	81
Hunting/Fishing License.....	725
High School Diplomas.....	37
Governor Memorial Cert's....	3,500
Military Family Relief Fund....	53

(Amounts to \$145,227.08 in grants)



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The Indiana Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Memorial Wall Indiana has sustained the following casualties since the last IDVA Update



United States
Army Specialist
**Shane Hasan
Ahmed**, 31, Ches-
terfield, Michigan,
and formerly of
Bedford, Indiana.

Killed 14 November 2010
when his unit was fired upon by
insurgents while conducting oper-
ations in Konar province, Afghani-
stan.

He joined the Army in 2007
and was assigned to the 1st Battal-
ion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st
Brigade Combat Team, 101st Air-
borne Division (Air Assault), Fort
Campbell, Ky.



United States
Army Staff Ser-
geant **Kevin Mat-
thew Pape**, 30, of
Fort Wayne, Indi-
ana.

Died Novem-
ber 16, 2010 in Ko-

nar province, Afghanistan, of
wounds suffered when insurgents
attacked his unit using small arms
fire.

Assigned to the 1st Battalion,
75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter
Army Airfield, Ga., he joined the
Army in 2005.



United States
Army Sergeant
First Class **Barry
E. Jarvis**, 36, of
Tell City, Indiana.

Died Novem-
ber 29, 2010 in
Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan,
in support of Operation Enduring
Freedom. According to initial re-
ports, Sergeant First Class Jarvis
died of injuries sustained from
small arms fire.

He was assigned to B Troop,
1st Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regi-
ment, 101st Airborne Division,
Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

The Last Six Seconds in the Lives of Two Heroic Marines

On Nov 13, 2010 Lt General
John Kelly, USMC gave a speech
to the Semper Fi Society of St.
Louis, MO. This was 4 days after
his son, Lt Robert Kelly, USMC
was killed by an IED while on his
3rd Combat tour.

During his speech, General
Kelly spoke about the dedication
and valor of the young men and
women who step forward each
and every day to protect us. Dur-
ing the speech, he never men-
tioned the loss of his own son. He
closed the speech with the moving
account of the last 6 seconds in the
lives of 2 young Marines who died
with rifles blazing to protect their
brother Marines...

"I will leave you with a story
about the kind of people they are,
about the quality of the steel in
their backs, about the kind of ded-
ication they bring to our country
while they serve in uniform. And
forever after as veterans.

"Two years ago when I was
the Commander of all U.S. and
Iraqi forces, in fact, the 22nd of
April 2008, two Marine infantry
battalions, 1/9 "The Walking
Dead," and 2/8 were switching out
in Ramadi. One battalion in the
closing days of their deployment
going home very soon, the other
just starting its seven-month com-
bat tour. Two Marines, Corporal
Jonathan Yale and Lance Corporal
Jordan Haerter, 22 and 20 years
old respectively, one from each
battalion, were assuming the
watch together at the entrance gate
of an outpost that contained a
makeshift barracks housing 50
Marines. The same broken down
ramshackle building was also
home to 100 Iraqi police, also my
men and our allies in the fight
against the terrorists in Ramadi, a
city until recently the most dan-
gerous city on earth and owned by

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Al Qaeda. Yale was a dirt poor mixed-race kid from Virginia with a wife and daughter, and a mother and sister who lived with him and he supported as well. He did this on a yearly salary of less than \$23,000. Haerter, on the other hand, was a middle class white kid from Long Island. They were from two completely different worlds. Had they not joined the Marines they would never have met each other, or understood that multiple America's exist simultaneously depending on one's race, education level, economic status, and where you might have been born. But they were Marines, combat Marines, forged in the same crucible of Marine training, and because of this bond they were brothers as close, or closer, than if they were born of the same woman.

'The mission orders they received from the sergeant squad leader I am sure went something like: "Okay you two clowns, stand this post and let no unauthorized personnel or vehicles pass." "You clear?" I am also sure Yale and Haerter then rolled their eyes and said in unison something like: "Yes Sergeant," with just enough attitude that made the point without saying the words, "No kidding sweetheart, we know what we're doing." They then relieved two other Marines on watch and took up their post at the entry control point of Joint Security Station Nasser, in the Sophia section of Ramadi, Al Anbar, Iraq.

A few minutes later a large blue truck turned down the alleyway - perhaps 60-70 yards in length - and sped its way through the serpentine of concrete jersey walls. The truck stopped just short of where the two were posted and detonated, killing them both catastrophically. Twenty-four brick masonry houses were damaged or destroyed. A mosque 100 yards away collapsed. The truck's engine came to rest two hundred yards away knocking most of a house down before it stopped. Our explosive experts reckoned the blast was made of 2,000 pounds of explosives. Two died, and because these two young infantrymen didn't have it in their DNA to run from danger, they saved 150 of their Iraqi and American brothers-in-arms.

"When I read the situation report about the incident a few hours after it happened I called the regimental commander for details as something about this struck me as different. Marines dying or being seriously wounded is commonplace in combat. We expect Marines regardless of rank or MOS to stand their ground and do their duty, and even die in the process, if that is what the mission takes. But this just seemed different. The regimental commander had just returned from the site and he agreed, but reported that there were no American witnesses to the event-just Iraqi police. I figured if there was any chance of finding out what actually happened and then to decorate the two Marines to acknowledge their

bravery, I'd have to do it as a combat award that requires two eyewitnesses and we figured the bureaucrats back in Washington would never buy Iraqi statements. If it had any chance at all, it had to come under the signature of a general officer.

I traveled to Ramadi the next day and spoke individually to a half-dozen Iraqi police all of whom told the same story. The blue truck turned down into the alley and immediately sped up as it made its way through the serpentine. They all said, "We knew immediately what was going on as soon as the two Marines began firing." The Iraqi police then related that some of them also fired, and then to a man, ran for safety just prior to the explosion. All survived. Many were injured, some seriously. One of the Iraqis elaborated and with tears welling up said, "They'd run like any normal man would to save his life."

"What he didn't know until then, he said, and what he learned that very instant, was that Marines are not normal. Choking past the emotion he said, "Sir, in the name of God no sane man would have stood there and done what they did. No sane man. They saved us all."

"What we didn't know at the time, and only learned a couple of days later after I wrote a summary and submitted both Yale and Haerter for posthumous Navy Crosses, was that one of our security cameras, damaged initially in the blast, recorded some of the

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suicide attack. It happened exactly as the Iraqis had described it. It took exactly six seconds from when the truck entered the alley until it detonated.

"You can watch the last six seconds of their young lives. Putting myself in their heads I supposed it took about a second for the two Marines to separately come to the same conclusion about what was going on once the truck came into their view at the far end of the alley. Exactly no time to talk it over, or call the sergeant to ask what they should do. Only enough time to take half an instant and think about what the sergeant told them to do only a few minutes before: "let no unauthorized personnel or vehicles pass." The two Marines had about five seconds left to live.

It took maybe another two seconds for them to present their weapons, take aim, and open up. By this time the truck was halfway through the barriers and gaining speed the whole time. Here, the recording shows a number of Iraqi police, some of whom had fired their AKs, now scattering like the normal and rational men they were - some running right past the Marines. They had three seconds left to live.

"For about two seconds more, the recording shows the Marines' weapons firing non-stop. the truck's windshield exploding into shards of glass as their rounds take it apart and tore in to the body of the son-of-a-bitch who is trying to get past them to kill their broth-

ers - American and Iraqi - bedded down in the barracks totally unaware of the fact that their lives at that moment depended entirely on two Marines standing their ground. If they had been aware, they would have known they were safe because two Marines stood between them and a crazed suicide bomber. The recording shows the truck careening to a stop immediately in front of the two Marines. In all of the instantaneous violence Yale and Haerter never hesitated. By all reports and by the recording, they never stepped back. They never even started to step aside. They never even shifted their weight. With their feet spread shoulder width apart, they leaned into the danger, firing as fast as they could work their weapons. They had only one second left to live.

"The truck explodes. The camera goes blank. Two young men go to their God. Six seconds. Not enough time to think about their families, their country, their flag, or about their lives or their deaths, but more than enough time for two very brave young men to do their duty.

"Into eternity. That is the kind of people who are on watch all over the world tonight - for you.

"We Marines believe that God gave America the greatest gift he could bestow to man while he lived on this earth - freedom. We also believe he gave us another

gift nearly as precious - our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Marines - to safeguard that gift and guarantee no force on this earth can ever steal it away.

"It has been my distinct honor to have been with you here today.

"Rest assured our America, this experiment in democracy started over two centuries ago, will forever remain the "land of the free and home of the brave" so long as we never run out of tough young Americans who are willing to look beyond their own self-interest and comfortable lives, and go into the darkest and most dangerous places on earth to hunt down, and kill, those who would do us harm.

"God Bless America, and... SEMPER FIDELIS!"



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AMVETS Honor Flights



AMVETS Post 99 in Indianapolis has been sending WWII veterans, their spouses and other supporters to Washington D.C. for three years now to experience the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, Vietnam Memorial Wall and the Iwo Jima Memorial. The trip also includes a trip to the Tomb of the Unknowns.

IDVA personnel have been lucky enough to get on some of those flights and were able to share in the excitement of these men and women. Director Tom Applegate, Deputy Director John Newsom and former State Service Officer, Kris Bertrand have participated, and State Service Officer Ashley Roberts is on the list for an upcoming flight.

On this latest trip, shown above, Indiana Republican Congressman Mike Pence took some time to meet with the WWII veterans, their loved ones, Indiana Adjutant General R. Martin Umbarger, and Department of Indiana AMVETS at the National WWII Memorial.

Brave Lady

Daughter of a Navy Pilot, died
December 7, 2010



"Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good."

Elizabeth Edwards, July 3, 1949
- December 7, 2010

VA Launches Veterans Relationship Management (VRM)

VA is launching a multi-year initiative called Veterans Relationship Management (VRM) to improve Veterans' access to health care and benefits informa-

tion. By the end of this year, VRM will deliver improved telephone services to enable Veterans to reach a call center agent faster. Recording and review of calls will ensure the quality of services provided to Veterans.

VRM enhancements will be rolled out in six-month increments. An important component of VRM is the Internet site, which puts the Veteran in the driver's seat for information.

VA collaborated with the Department of Defense to provide a single sign-on capability for both Service members and Veterans. Single sign-on will quickly establish an individual's identity and allow that person to complete transactions without having to re-enter information.

Self-service access through the Internet site (www.ebenefits.va.gov) is already available in some benefit areas, including military personnel records, VA home loan eligibility certificates, and status information on compensation and pension claims.

Once fully realized, VRM promises veterans a "better experience" when they contact VA for assistance.



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Improving Lives One Coat At a Time

Story by Sgt. William E. Henry,
Indiana National Guard Public
Affairs

INDIANAPOLIS - A blast of bitterly cold weather rushed through Indianapolis, Dec. 6, as local children headed to Stout Field Elementary School in single digit temperatures, some with little or no protection from the frigid conditions according to school officials.

Relief was in sight later in the school day when April Bentley, a human resources employee at the Indiana National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters at Stout Field, arrived with approximately 100 coats to ease the circumstances of underprivileged students who attend.



April Bentley, a human resources employee at Indiana National Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters, and Indiana's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger pose with students, Brandon Albright, Joshua Shepard, and Zackery Albright, at Stout Field Elementary School, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs)

Bentley said she enjoyed helping provide students the

warmth and protection they need, and she also sympathized with their situations.

"Words cannot express the feeling you get seeing a child get a new coat. You can see it in their eyes that they genuinely appreciate it. No kids should be left in the cold, and it warms my heart to help," said Bentley. "I grew up like these kids are growing up now, so I can relate. I may not make a lot of money now, but all my child's needs and my personal needs are met, and it humbles me to help those who are in need. These kids are our future; it's a great investment."

Each year Indiana National Guard employees working on Stout Field raise money to donate cold weather items to Stout Field Elementary students for the "Warm Hands, Warm Hearts" program.

The school principal, Ms. Judy Stegemann, said she and her staff keep an eye out for students who come to school without adequate coats every day for this program.

"Teachers refer kids they have in class without a coat. Adults at bus duty or car rider duty refer kids without coats," said Stegemann. "Our parent liaison, Casey Foust, gets all the referrals and works with children, families to get coats."

"These coats are given to kids who come in without coats, have coats that don't fit properly, or don't zip or button," said Stege-

mann. "The coats donated prevent kids from being cold and in the long run probably prevents illness that may cause the students to miss school."

Indiana's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, visited with three selected students to personally greet them, present them with new coats and his personal challenge coin.



Indiana's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger places a coat on 6th grade student Brandon Albright, while visiting Stout Field Elementary School, to present a select few students with new coats and his challenge coin as part of the "Warm Hands, Warm Hearts" program, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs)

"Every year when I come down to this, all you have to do is just look in their eyes when you hand them a brand new jacket. Some of them have never had a brand new jacket. Some of them don't even have a jacket," said Umbarger.

"There's not a better feeling to know you've helped a young child so they don't have to go out in the cold uncovered. Today, probably

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the coldest day of the year, it was only fitting that we were there."



Indiana's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger explains the symbols on his personal challenge coin to students, Brandon Albright, Joshua Shepard, and Zackery Albright, at Stout Field Elementary School, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs)

Brandon Albright, 6th grade, Zackery Albright, 5th grade, and Joshua Shepard, 5th grade, were those chosen to visit with the general. After Zackery was given his coat and a coin he told Umbarger, "I plan on being a Soldier when I grow up."

School officials and students were pleased and appreciated the program.

"We are grateful for the support of the Stout Field National Guard. Their donations are making a direct impact on our children," said Stegemann. "We provide our students a great education, two warm meals a day, and with the Guard's help a warm coat for winter! We are truly thankful for their generosity."

Umbarger praised the work of those involved with the program. He said it would not happen nor thrive if those who coordinated it did not have such giving personalities.

"They're always giving their time and their talent. They're always looking for ways to raise money. They spend their time and effort to raise the money, and they go out and buy the jackets," said Umbarger. "They have me present them, and they don't want to take any credit for it. Now that is a true giver. That is a person who has a wonderful open heart. True philanthropy is when you give and don't want any credit for it, so I just think all the credit should go to them. I'm very proud of them."



Indiana's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger places a coat on 5th grade student, Joshua Shepard, while visiting Stout Field Elementary School, to present a select few students with new coats and his challenge coin as part of the "Warm Hands, Warm Hearts" program, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs)

Bentley said she handles only a portion of responsibilities among seven team members who make this program work. She said the team works together to host annual events and collect donations to support the program.

"With the money we earn we look out for deals on coats and purchase them. We often check with the school as to what their needs are so that we can fill those specific needs. Then I arrange for the drop off," said Bentley. "The kids love to see the general, it makes the moment when they receive their coats that much more special."

"I can't say enough about the importance of this program," explained Stegemann. "These coats not only keep these kids warm, but they also prevent illness, which in turn helps attendance. They also make the kids happy. The kids are allowed to choose a coat they like. Our kids don't get many new things. Picking out a new coat is a big deal. It's like getting a new pair of shoes and feeling like you can run faster and jump higher. They just love these coats."

Bentley said if anyone would like to participate in the program they can contact her directly at abentley@ago.in.gov



Indiana's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger speaks with elementary students Zackery Albright, Brandon Albright, and Joshua Shepard, while visiting Stout Field Elementary School, to present the select few with new coats and his challenge coin as part of the "Warm Hands, Warm Hearts" program, Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William E. Henry, Indiana National Guard Public Affairs)

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Students “Adopt” Indiana Historical Marker, Re-dedication at Indiana State House

Earlier this year, teacher Chris Hammock, Park Tudor School, and seven students, Draven Cooper, Abigail O’Connell, Nathan Lee, Kalysta Lee, Sydney Allen, Riley Allen, and Madison Allen “adopted” a faded and worn state historical marker about the Civil War. They cleaned and repainted the marker, returning it to the original dark blue with gold letters. A public re-dedication ceremony for this marker and another marker about the state capitol, was conducted on Thursday, December 16, 2010. The ceremony took place in the **North Atrium of the State House** on Capitol Avenue, in Indianapolis.

On December 20, 1946, the Indiana Historical Bureau dedicated the first state historical marker in our current format; this “State Capitol” marker initiated the new program to permanently mark 300 to 350 of the most historic sites in Indiana; the historical marker program continues today. The text of this marker is: “State capital was moved to Indianapolis, 1825, from Corydon. The capitol built on this

site in 1835 was razed in 1878 to make way for this State House, completed in 1888.”



In 1964, the Indiana Civil War Centennial Commission installed the “Civil War Arsenal, 1861-1864” marker on the State House grounds. The text of this marker is: “Governor Oliver P. Morton established a state arsenal to supply Indiana’s troops with ammunition. First located adjacent to the state capitol, the arsenal was later moved to the present site of Arsenal Technical High School.”



State historical markers commemorate significant individuals, organizations, places, and events

in Indiana history. These markers help communities throughout the state promote, preserve, and present their history for the education and enjoyment of residents and tourists of all ages. For more than 95 years the Indiana

Historical Bureau, an agency of the State of Indiana, has been marking Indiana history. Since 1946, the marker format has been the large roadside marker, which has the familiar dark blue background with gold lettering and the outline of the state of Indiana at the top. There are approximately 500 of these markers across the state.

Volunteers throughout the state—like the Park Tudor students—are helping the Historical Bureau to survey, paint, and repair state historical markers. Any person or group interested in volunteering to help with the repair and maintenance program is encouraged to contact the Historical Bureau.

For more information about this marker, the Indiana Historical Marker Program, and other resources about Indiana, please visit the Indiana Historical Bureau’s website at www.IN.gov/history or call 317-232-6276.



Teacher, Chris Hammock and students.

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Director's Comments



We hope you've enjoyed the first exclusively digital/online version of the *Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Update*.

We feel it's important that we maintain the same quality newsletter which you've grown to expect.

We will be e-mailing the *Update* to many addresses which in the past have not always been included. In this new mailing will be those Hoosier Women Veterans who have been kind enough to complete an HWV registration form and indicate they would like to receive the newsletter. Also included are each of the State legislators in the House and Senate and many staffers in the Administration. Whereas before we sent hard copies of the newsletter to the veterans' service organizations (VSOs) for distribution to their Posts and Chapters, they will now only get the digital version. I would ask the representatives from the VSOs to forward the newsletter to their respective Posts and Chapters for printing and posting on bulletin boards. In that manner veterans from every Post or Chapter in the State of Indiana will have access to the *Update*.

We ask that those of you who do not wish to receive the *Update* let us know as soon as possible to avoid the sending of the next edition. Hopefully we don't get any e-mails from persons asking us to remove them from the distribution list.

On another subject - the next IDVA Spring Conference (**6-9 June 2011**) will again be held at the Marriott Inn - East in Indianapolis, but we will go back to the Monday through Thursday concept we have traditionally used, with the annual Jon Brinkley Memorial Golf Outing remaining as the only event scheduled for Monday, 6 June..

Tuesday the 7th will remain directed at updates from the IDVA and SAA staff and from various organizations which have traditionally had information to share. That day will conclude with the annual Indiana Veterans' Service Officers' Association (INVSOA) meeting.

I envision Wednesday, 8 June, morning instruction from the VSOs from the VFW, DAV and AMVETS organizations. Part of Wednesday afternoon (if not all of it) will be covered by instructors from within the Federal VA itself and will include updates from the VA Director and his staff.

A big change in the conference will be the addition of peer instructors. For most of the Thursday, 9 June, morning blocks of instruction I've asked your INVSOA President, Bruce Stanton, to help me select instructors from within the County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO) ranks, who will be speaking to you on subjects about which they feel they are proficient. This utilizes a heretofore untapped pool of experts who may have a lot of information other CVSOs can use to their advantage.

We will administer the CVSO Test at around 11 a.m. and dismiss at noon on Thursday so everyone can make the drive back to their respective counties.

The Fall Conference at the Indiana Veterans' Home (Home) was a success and, because of continuing budget restrictions, we envision using the Home every year for our fall conference. The only change we will make is that only new CVSOs will be required to take the tour. We will also use CVSO peer instructors as the primary instructors but will also invite the federal VA to share any changes which have occurred in the interval between the spring and fall conference. The **2011 Fall Conference will be on October 14, 2011** at the Indiana Veterans' Home.